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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5374  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA IMMEDIATE 0081  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 6003  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE 0390  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE 0508  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE 0252  
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE 0005  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 0384  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3437  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0582  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2292  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0021  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0260  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE 0287  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 0278  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2486  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3069  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 000593

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES CONTEMPLATING NEXT STEPS ON BURMA

REF: A. STATE 20000

[1](#)B. MANILA 179 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador on February 22, Foreign Secretary Romulo welcomed the latest U.S. thinking on Burma

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(ref a) and pledged to continue to use Philippine chairmanship of ASEAN through August to encourage the Burmese regime to take meaningful steps on its roadmap, as President Arroyo had done at the ASEAN Summit in January (ref b). Romulo observed that ASEAN members seemed increasingly more vocal on the need for change in Burma. The Philippines, he said, was no longer the lone ASEAN voice on Burma. He admitted that he was not sure this was having an impact, but said ASEAN needed to use every opportunity to push Burma. Romulo noted that the UNSYG had discussed with him the importance of the role of the Special Envoy when the two met in January. Romulo had no specific thoughts on candidates "as long as it is someone strong and effective."

[1](#)2. (C) Pol/C separately met on February 21 with Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Asia and the Pacific Romeo

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Manalo to discuss ref a views. Manalo commented that this meeting was especially timely, as the DFA expected to convene an in-house working group during the week of February 26 to discuss how best to handle the subject of Burma during the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference and ASEAN Regional Forum in late July/early August. He reiterated the Philippines' strong interest -- including by President Arroyo and Foreign Secretary Romulo -- in seeing meaningful change, including

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release of political prisoners, in Burma, although he faulted the U.S. for our insistence on using the "old name" rather than calling the country Myanmar, "as everyone else does."

He commented that the Philippines could play a useful role bilaterally as well as in the ASEAN context in encouraging the Burmese regime to take additional steps on the roadmap. He acknowledged a clear role on this issue for the UN Human Rights Council, of which the Philippines is a member, while noting that additional assistance from UN bodies rather than any new sanctions would likely be more productive in prodding the regime forward. He recognized the importance of moving quickly to suggest acceptable names as possible Special Envoys, while noting that the regime likely would not welcome individuals from Thailand and Malaysia, as they would not be "disinterested parties," as might someone from the Philippines. He said that PRC Ambassador to the Philippines Li had clearly indicated that the Chinese did not want to offer anyone up for this role, either. He promised to brief Pol/C after the in-house policy review.

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KENNEY